# World Unity in Marx's Capital and the Appearance of the Overcoming of Capitalism at the National Level

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Summary:

From the beginning of the twentieth century, the idea that Marx's Capital does not serve to explain the relationship between countries as a consequence of the domination of the monopoly stage and the imperialist intervention of the most powerful states dominates among Marxists. There is another current of authors who claim a reading of Capital to understand the current world unity and criticize the previous ones for having a nationalist reading of Marx's work. However, as we will show in the paper based on the analysis of the proposals of Pradella, Astarita and Dussel, despite their attempt to overcome it, they also fall into an explanation focused on the national. We will propose an alternative explanation that starts from the commodity as the bearer of the social relation of capital to account for the world content of the nation form. On this basis, we will try to explain these nationalist views based on Capital (and its failed attempts to overcome them) as an expression of a political action of the working class to which the expropriation of the bourgeoisie in a country is presented not as a moment of the development of capital itself but as the possibility of the total or partial overcoming of it at the national level.

**Socialism – Capital – Nationalism**

Solving the problem of world unity in capitalism arises as an immediate need of those who seek to organize their political action based on the developments made by Marx. In The Communist Manifesto or in the German Ideology there is a perspective that starts from world unity as a content that has the nation state in its form. A perspective expressed in his proposal of the need to build an international party of the working class as the concrete way to realize that unity in terms of the revolutionary action of the working class.

However, among Marxists towards the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, a revision of Capital began in search of a justification for its political action. As a form of a consciousness that conceives the centralization of capital in the hands of the working class at the national level as the realization of socialism, a reading of Capital emerges as a text that illustrates the determinations of capital in national terms but does not advance in world unity. This perspective proposes, not without differences, an advance in the study of world unity based on analyzing political ties as determinants. Capitalism in its development on a planetary scale would no longer have value as its content but would be limited to the national scale while force would rule on a global scale. We find Luxemburg's perspective through the development of colonization and the search for external markets to solve underconsumption, or from Lenin's perspective as a result of a higher phase of capitalism where free competition would have given rise to a concentration and centralization of capital and the monopoly stage where world unity would be given by the action of the state through imperialism (Kornblihtt 2008). This development, although it seeks to account for the global from an internationalist perspective, has the national as its starting point. To these explanations, an alternative emerges that criticizes the idea of a domination of politics and seeks to overcome it through an explanation of the national as an expression of the world economy. These authors will seek to take up a reading of Capital where the interpretation that indicates that it is a work that studies England is wrong, but that, although exemplified in England, it would account for world unity by criticizing the nationalist reading of Capital. However, as we will see in this work, these perspectives of taking up Marx's developments in Capital not focused on the national, despite proposing it, do not manage to overcome what they criticize.

## In Search of a Theory of Imperialism in Capital

The fact that Marx conceives of the study developed in Capital as an expression of world unity is clear from explicit passages of his work. England appears as an exemplification as the most complete expression of capitalism in its time. However, when it comes to analyzing world unity, the textual references in volume I seem to contribute to an explanation of capitalism where each national space is externally linked

to others and where state mediation appears as an external actor. Whereas when politics is analyzed at the national level, the determinations of the state as an expression of capital as a whole (or social capital) appear clear, particularly in relation to the determination of the working day (see Caligaris 2012). In a recent work, Pradella (2013), on the basis of recovering this textual evidence, tries to show that in Capital Marx already develops an explanation of imperialism that contains an answer to the problems posed by Luxemburg and Lenin.[1] In this way, he seeks to show that Marx in Capital develops a study that explains world unity in contrast to what he calls the nationalist readings of Capital.[2] To develop his argument, he focuses on quotes where state action appears as a result of a permanent expansion of capital in its need to concentrate and centralize. In this search, Pradella affirms that Marx, by recognizing the advance towards world competition and towards the domination of the countries that produce raw materials for supply, is giving an account of both what Luxemburg (which Harvey takes up) affirms about geographical expansion and the state struggle between powers that Lenin maintains. The particularity of Pradella's proposal in his "return to Marx" is that this would not be the product of either a permanent original accumulation or a different stage of capital. In this sense, Pradella affirms, the domination of the powers over the weaker countries in political form would explain their lower development and subordinate condition. As we can see, Pradella's proposal is based on the conception that while value rules at the national level, at the international level direct political domination appears as the general social relation. Pradella thus seeks to position himself in a reading of Capital where political domination would not be external to capital but the result of it. In this reading, Marx in Capital would develop an explanation of imperialism consistent with his economic explanation of competition. However, if for it the result of the development of capital itself leads to world unity being through the political competition of countries, it does not end up making explicit what the general character of the capitalist relationship is now. In this way, he ends up with a proposal similar to Lenin's in relation to the predominance of direct political relations over the links between private and independent producers, although he takes away the specificity of the monopolistic moment of capital. Now, if the general relationship at the world level is political, the question that is not answered is where the political action of capital comes from. Insofar as it is the expression of capital as a whole and the social relation in the form of value is global, the national political form that

[1] "The general law of capitalist accumulation has to be understood as a law of capital accumulation on a world scale and, as the state maintains a fundamental role in this process, of imperialism" (Pradella 2013, p. 4).

[2] 2"The concept of total social capital - or, more simply , of ´capital`refers to all branches of a ´given society´not confined by national boundaries" (Pradella 2013, p. 120)

Pradella goes on to explain as the relation that is established at the international level can only be the form of a content that it has not developed.

The search to find a theory of imperialism in Marx led Pradella to convert Marx's analysis in relation to the social relation of the commodity no longer as an advance from the simplest determinations of capital to the complex ones, but as an element of the historical genesis of a later development. In this sense, the quotes to which he refers are a moment of Marx's illustration of how capital advances in its world unity, but they do not account for the character of that content. It is not a question of denying the direct relationship through politics but of being able to find its content. Pradella, in his rector, although he can explain the genesis of political intervention (the expansion of accumulation outside the original national space), cannot explain the content, falling into the circularity of Lenin's proposal, where power explains power. That is, by explaining the relationship from politics, Pradella, despite his claim to an explanation of capital that starts from the global, returns to the starting point centered on the national that he wants to criticize.

Transfers of value as the content of the world unit

The search for an explanation from Capital that does not focus on politics is found in Dussel (1988). In this case, it is assumed that national differentiation is a moment of competence and therefore corresponds to expressing a content that is developed in Volume I but whose concrete form appears in Volume III. On this basis, Dussel is going to point out that what is at stake is to make a development based on Marx but that does not start from the appearance of state action but from the content. In this approach, he will not only differ from the explanations that start from political action to explain national difference (Lenin) but also from authors who propose super-exploitation as the content of dependence (in debate with Marini). Dussel, in line with Rosdolsky, will point out that The capital of Volume I corresponds to capital in general and that only in Volume III can progress be made in accounting for multiple capitals and competition. In developing his explanation of national differentiation, the approach will be based on Marx's developments on inter- and intra-branch competition, with greater emphasis on the former. The general approach is that the development of national unity as a moment of competition is explained by the formation of the general rate of profit with the so-called transformation of values into price. In this movement, Marx explains how branches with a lower organic composition give value to those with a higher organic composition. On the basis of an approach that goes back to Grossman and Rosdolsky and more recently to Palloix, Dussel goes on to propose that this same movement operates in relation to countries: "The determination of a world average profit should work in the same way as that of the national average profit (among the various branches of production (...) Palloix argues that unequal exchange for different

organic composition determines the different rate of surplus value or the value of wages different between underdeveloped and developed countries..." (Dussel 1988, p. 319)

Dussel states that the relationship at the world level is one of competition and therefore of the transfer of surplus value and therefore is one of dependence, while the relationship between classes is one of appropriation of surplus value and therefore of exploitation. He claims that this is the most rigorous way of applying Marx's concepts and in methodological terms contrasts with the explanations that start from the historical to explain development worldwide. Moreover, he does not even hold the proposal as his own, but risks that Marx would have affirmed what he affirms: "Marx would have expressed the thing essentially and fundamentally simply: dependence consists in the transfer of surplus value from a less developed national global capital to the more developed one" (Dussel 1988, p. 330). When he advances in the development of competition and the more detailed analysis of how this transfer of value operates, Dussel proposes competition as a mechanism of the crisis and the devaluation of dependent capital with respect to the dominant (p. 338). So far Dussel focuses on the analysis of the formation of the average rate of profit, but here he incorporates a second analysis that refers to the crisis of capitals that fail to appreciate themselves at the average rate of profit and the triumph in competition of capitals that obtain an extraordinary profit.

At this point, there is an equalization between this transfer of value and that which occurs with competition within the same branch. This equalization, which we also find in other authors such as Shaikh (2008, chapter 4), is the product of not differentiating the way in which the rates of profit are equalized from that which generates a difference in the ability to valorize. Dussel's general approach is that what Marx points out in relation to expansion towards the colonies as a mechanism to counteract the tendency of the rate of profit to fall, is the product of the fact that this transfer of value from countries that operate with lower organic composition and/or with lower productivity favors countries with greater organic composition.

Mixing the appropriation of surplus value by organic composition and the corresponding by different productivity is the result of not realizing that capital is a relationship between private and independent producers that is realized directly. The formation of the rate of profit and the prices of production is the concrete form in which capitals are equalized. The appropriation of surplus value leads to capitals of the same magnitude being valued equally despite the fact that the value produced in each branch is different. On the other hand, differences in productivity within a branch explain why there are extraordinary profits in a branch (circumstantial or permanent if they are the result of production conditions that cannot be reproduced by capital, as in the so-called land rent). In the first case, the transfer of value, it is the way in which the equalization in the capacity of capital to appreciate is explained, while in the other it is explained why capital is differentiated.

As we can see, Dussel's proposal seeks to explain the national problem on the basis of value and not on profit, which is the concrete form it takes. Although it points to competition as the specific area in which national differentiation develops, it then falls into direct relations without making explicit what their link is when they are the ones that explain the way in which national differentiation appears. This approach, which appears not so clear when we refer to the formation of the average rate of profit, is forcefully expressed when Dussel analyzes the role of the State.

Dussel, in explaining that world unity occurs in an analogous way to the formation of inter- and intra-branch competition, abstracts the State from unity. While national differentiation and dependence are for Dussel the result of competition, the action of the state through protectionism will allow national economies to be abstracted from competition. In this way, he argues, the country stops ceding value and could develop. "It should be noted that the 'national global capital' has, for its part, its own productive (manufacturing, etc.) and circulatory (in the 'national market') moments. Both areas have their own consistency (...) but relative, not absolute. 'Global national capital' is relatively autonomous within global world capital" (Dussel p. 343, emphasis in the original). Based on a quotation from chapter 20 of Capital, Dussel attributes to Marx in pointing out national differences in wages this idea that the state plays the role of denying competition externally

Dussel cannot be answered for the content of the separate and free form in which each national state acts and stops at how it appears. Although he begins by acknowledging the need to account for world unity on the basis of what Marx developed in Volume I from private and independent work and to market mediation as the form of social relations as a starting point, when he advances towards national differentiation he presupposes, although without making explicit, that the work should be directly linked. Only in this way can it conclude that if one branch or country cedes value to another, it implies a differentiation in the ability to accumulate in abstraction of whether or not the rates of profit are equalized. This starting point of direct relations goes hand in hand when analyzing the actions of the state with the power to impose itself on commercial relations and avoid competition. As long as competition is the product of direct relations, direct commercial relations have no more content than these. In fact, Dussel goes on to point out that the relationship at the world level is one of "domination": "the domination of one capital over another in competition, which produces a transfer of surplus value from the weakest to the strongest. This transference, as we have said, is the effect of domination." Then he advances in the possibility of weak nations to abstract themselves in competition and of the powers to attack them in order to restore it. "When a country tries to evade competition (from the capitalist world market, as Nicaragua did in 1987), it is militarily and violently coerced to 'retake' the system of 'freedom in competition'" (Dussel 1988, p. 360). Inversion, from its "economic" point of departure, as the abstract form that develops concretely in the

relation of competition, ends up being inverted where the general relation is the political relation that explains the economic one: "The social relation of domination between national bourgeoisies then determines the transfer of value in world competition" (Dussel 1988, p. 350).

What Dussel cannot answer is where the capacity of state action to impose itself on competition comes from and would deny free national development. In this way, Dussel, although he starts from the need for an explanation that advances towards the concrete forms of competition and the account of the national as a concrete form of world unity, ends up in an analysis where direct relations are the specific way of developing capitalism. Since the state appears as the direct form of social relation par excellence and Dussel finds no content other than the direct relation, although he claims to have a world starting point, Dussel ends up in world unity as a relation between nation states relatively abstracted from world competition. And since it cannot explain the content of that state unity, it cannot explain the content of world unity.

Value as national unity

While in Pradella we found a search to assimilate Lenin's approach to imperialism's and Marx's and in Dussel the attempt to find in Marx a foundation for the politics of national liberation appears explicitly, other authors see in Capital an explanation of capital where the national-world contradiction could be overcome in order to advance in an analysis that places the conflict between classes at the center of the analysis. Astarita proposes an alternative that seeks to explain national unity on the basis of an economic explanation based on the developments of Capital where the differences in state intervention are explained from the perspective of competition but where the national space or the state do not appear as external. Also focused on Volume I of Capital, an explanation of world dynamics is intended that goes beyond the view focused on state action and monopoly capital that starts from the theories of imperialism, in particular that of Lenin, but at the same time criticizes the idea of unequal exchange both due to differences in productivity and organic composition. Astarita criticizes these visions because they focus on the relationship between countries and proposes his own as the explanation that places class exploitation as the axis although accounting for national differences (Astarita 2004, p. 354).

Astarita starts from the fact that capital is global in a process of permanent internationalization (in this he follows Palloix) and geographical expansion (in this he follows Harvey). But according to him, these authors, as well as those of dependency theory, failed to articulate the tendency to expansion with the developments proposed by Marx in relation to the existence of a universal relationship and its particular form in nation states mediated by competition. Like Dussel, and following the approaches of Shaikh and Carchedi, Astarita places the central element in competition. But while

Dussel saw in the state a relative autonomy that allowed it a certain margin of independence, Astarita argues that as long as competition prevails, the state must adapt to value.[3] In particular, it will show this when it analyzes the exchange rate and the possible state interventions will only be deviations in relation to a general need posed by the economy. Thus, while in Dussel we can see a politicist view of the State, in Astarita we find an exteriority where the State is dominated by the economy. This exteriority appears in its fullness in how the author conceives of competition as the general articulator of capital. Although it tries to construct a view that escapes the "nationally centered" perspectives, it will not be the commodity that will be the bearer of the value relationship between private and independent producers, but the competition that will be imposed externally on free individuals, coercing them to comply with the logic of capital.

"When we work with the concept of capital, each of the moments – the singular, the particular – can only be understood "from the point of view of the others and together with them"; and the universal must also be understood in this way, through singulars and particulars. This question can be exemplified through the way in which the logic of capital (the universal) is deployed through particulars and singulars. That logic only acts and makes itself felt on each capitalist through competition; it is through it that the capitalist is forced to develop the productive forces and technology, to replace living labor with the machine and to promote the increase in the generation of surplus value." (Astarita 2004, pp. 311-312)

In this quotation it is seen how Astarita, starting from the logic of concepts, sees that the action of the subjects is imposed externally and not the result of their own movement.[4] externality is what carries him, although he says that he starts from capital as a social totality, thinking of each national space as autonomous but externally subject to competition. In debate with Emmanuel, Astarita states that there is no world value:

> "... Private work in capitalist society became a reality as part of social labor through the exchange relations established by the producers. We therefore have

[3] An exception in this approach, which exceeds what is discussed here, although we will return to it later, is the one that for Astarita is achieved when through the action of the working class advances in the expropriation of capital, there we would be either facing socialism or facing a non-capitalist bureaucratic state (Astarita 2011). In the same sense, the possibility of a national unity separated from capital is proposed with the proposal of capital expansion or internationalization, which would account for national autonomy. Globalization for Astarita is the advance of capitalist relations throughout the world (Astarita 2004, p. 300 and 315). Does this imply that there used to be national spaces where capital does not fully govern? As we will see, his nationalist perspective appears in all its fullness with the idea of national spaces of value.

[4] For an analysis of logic as a necessity of thought to account for the quantitative but which is taken to the analysis of the quality of phenomena as an expression of the fetishism of the commodity, see Iñigo Carrera (2008, chapters 7 and 8)

> to study how this general thesis is particularized at the level of the world economy, in which goods, produced in different geographical areas, sometimes enter into exchange relations but often have no possibility of doing so. This means that in the world economy not all private work actually becomes part of global social work. They are not reduced to the same time as universal abstract labor because they are exchanged in specific areas of value, supported by particular developments of the productive forces." (Astarita 2004, p. 321)

Astarita will seek to base his proposal as sustained in the development of Marx, in particular in relation to volume I. It will rely in particular on the references in the chapter on national wage differences. According to Astarita, Marx shows that national differences respond to how value appears in one national economy as more intensive than in the other. Unlike the authors who see it as the expression of an unequal exchange as a result of the differences in productivity in the capitals operating in each country (for example, Carchedi or Shaikh), Astarita argues that the difference occurs not because of a flow of value but because it acquires a different social character in one space and another. In this way, Astarita starts from the fact that each country has a unit of value that corresponds to the capitals that operate in that national space. According to his proposal, this is the result of the fact that only a small portion of the goods are made in the world market (Astarita 2004, p. 31). Therefore, in each national space, the value corresponding to its productivity together with the rest by the exchange rate governs.

For Astarita, differentiation on an international scale occurs as a result of differences in productivity, which means that countries with lower productivity produce less value, a weaker currency and less accumulation capacity, and countries with higher productivity more value and a stronger currency. In this way, national differences are explained for Astarita on the basis of Marx's developments in Capital. However, this separation from national unity has as its starting point the separation of the production of value from its realization, with the argument of the social character of the value of commodities. But not in terms of the work actually performed that is recognized by capital, but of the labor paid for it. Thus, it is maintained that a commodity can have more or less value in abstraction from the labor actually expended in producing it. When there are capitals of different productivity in the same branch, the fact that the price is fixed in relation to the least productive capital or on average between the two implies the possibility of an extraordinary profit for the capital with greater productivity. For Astarita, this is the product of the empowerment of the labor of the most productive capital. When the least productive capital is melted down by having to sell below its price of production and without a change in the productivity of labor, the market price is adjusted to the price of the production of the most productive, who can no longer make an extraordinary profit, the expenditure of the same labor time

loses its character of potentiation to behave normally. Astarita, based on this reasoning, advances not only in pointing out that all extraordinary profits are the product of enhanced work, but also in pointing out that, given its social nature, value is defined at the national level. Thus, when the merchandise made in a country where the branch operates with low productivity is exported and consumed in a country with higher productivity, it manages to obtain an extraordinary profit thanks to the fact that it manages to enhance the work done in its country of origin with less productivity thanks to the fact that it is recognized with the average productivity of the country of origin.[5]

Astarita's position is explicitly proposed as a variant of the theory of dependence, but although it seeks to explain world unity from capital, it poses value as an expression of a national unity. We see here that the starting point is national unity with competition as the way to articulate the different nations. The substantial difference is that the political action of states is directly explained as the expression of competition between capitals with different capacity to generate value. While in Pradella's proposal it appeared to acquire an autonomy that could not be explained, in Astarita's proposal each national space confronts the other externally and competition is the general social relationship. In this way, countries that manage to increase their productivity gain positions in the competition while those that produce less value are prone to deeper cyclical crises. The actions of the state thus appear as a direct expression of the need for national capital in its dispute. The state of this form can only directly express the value. This is particularly acute when Astarita analyzes the exchange rate. The state action that can lead the exchange rate to be overvalued or undervalued has no content since it necessarily tends to adapt to the national capacity to generate value. But since the value is national, state action expresses directly (or with distortions that return to equilibrium) national unity. In this way, the relationship of competition is a relationship between countries that has as its content the capacity of each country to value itself.

> "This implies, in our view, the need to conceive of the world value space as a 'universal' that exists through nationally differentiated value spaces, mediated by national currencies, and their relations to the world currency. This world space acquires a real existence as universal in world prices and in world currency. Therefore, we are in the presence of a totality in which the terms condition each other and where each moment becomes the "mediating foundation". If we consider the national spaces of value as singular ones, national currencies as their

[5] For a critique of Astarita in relation to enhanced labor and the exchange rate, see Iñigo Carrera (2009). Astarita's proposal also carries a discussion that is generalized for all branches with particular relevance not only at the international level but in the case of the agrarian branch on the nature of land rent. As Caligaris (2014) shows, for a discussion with the different perspectives that debated this problem in Marxism.

> particulars: and the world market - with the world currency - as the universal market where labor times acquire global social validity. In turn, national spaces of value mediate national currencies and the exchange rate, thus also affecting the world space." (Astarita 2004, p. 352, emphasis added)

In this paragraph, Astarita summarizes his position. With quotes from Hegel, Astarita seeks to escape from the "abstract universal". But it ends up falling into an external view of phenomena that "condition each other". On the one hand we have the world market and on the other the national spaces. In turn, competition acts as the force that imposes itself on nation states, conditioning them, but where they can abstract from it. This explains why there are spaces where there is more or less value, in proportion to the capitals that compose them.

The question that arises is how capitals with low productivity survive in competition with more concentrated capitals if the national space has lower productivity. The answer can be none other than the ability of national unity to abstract itself from this competence and become an autonomous space. But what makes a national unity specific is the presence of a differentiated state. That is to say that it is the existence of the state itself that explains the national space of value. But up to this point it was the national space of value that explained the power of the state. As we can see, Astarita in his search to find an economic explanation for world unity but taking the nation as a starting point falls into the fact that the explanation of the basic relationship of capitalism is political action. But imprisoned by its circularity, it cannot account for the content of said political action. In seeking to find a solution to his own criticisms of the primacy of Leninist theory of imperialism's politics on the basis of evidence that competition continues to operate globally, Astarita nevertheless also reaches a dead end.

Who is the subject?

As we have pointed out, the journey carried out does not seek to exhaust the discussions around Marxist explanations of the relationship between nation and world economy. Moreover, it does not even exhaust the explanations given by the authors in relation to the problem. The objective was to analyze how authors representative of different attempts to overcome the nationally centered character and that are raised from the reading of Marx's Capital as a work that accounts for world unity fail insofar as they end up at the same starting point that they criticize without being able to account for the determination of the political action that defines national differentiation. A question that arises from these attempts is what is the meaning of the quotations that these authors take from Marx in both Volumes I and Volumes III of Capital. Far from a problem of exegesis, we believe that the discussion on its meaning refers to the study of the method developed in Capital that allows us to advance on concrete forms as a

necessary moment for their transformation. Marx develops in Volume I the general determinations of the capitalist mode of production. In these it advances from the simplest form to the need for capital to surpass itself through the revolutionary action of the working class. In this development, capital as a whole appears as the subject of production. And insofar as the commodity is the bearer of the general social relation, and this develops on a global scale, it is a world subject. Indirect relations between private and independent producers are realized, however, in the form of a direct relationship. The purchase and sale has a contract as an expression of that relationship. The legal relationship establishes an equality of rights between free individuals. This relationship of equality is established between subjects who carry differences in terms of negotiation as a result of the particularity of the commodity they personify. In particular, between those who personify labor power and capital, a relationship of purchase and sale is established mediated by struggle. A struggle that exceeds the relationship that occurs in individual terms. Mediated by competition, the whole of the carriers of that commodity is a part. The class struggle then appears not as something external but as the form in which the general unity of the commodity relation is realized.

This struggle, if left to force, would result in the possibility of the sale of labor power below its value permanently, which would threaten the total capital itself.

This total capital has the state, as the general guarantor of the law, acting to regulate this conflict between the two classes of personifications of commodities who now present themselves as equal citizens before the law. This general determination of the state as the representative of capital as a whole (see Iñigo Carrera, 2008), however, is in turn presented in concrete form as a national state and not as a world state. The State acts by reproducing inwardly the need for capital as a whole but in relation to other countries in a relationship of competition. Dussel's approach appears correct insofar as international expansion exceeds the approach of Volume I where capital appears in general, but unlike his proposal, state action is not external to the relationship of competition but the concrete form it takes. In turn, in relation to Astarita's proposal, competition appears as the form in which there is a unity and not as an external link that is imposed on individuals (be they individuals, companies or nations).

Although the general analysis in abstract terms prevails, Marx at certain necessary moments of his research advances in terms of its historical development to account for the concrete form that capital takes. In this concrete development, the historical assumes different roles in the study of capital. In particular, in relation to the problem of world unity, the process of capital expansion appears, on the one hand. At this point, which is presented in the quotations taken by Pradella to show a Marx akin to the ideas of Luxemburg and Lenin, the key is the fact that he realizes a moment of development of capital and its advance towards becoming the general social relation, destroying or subsuming the previous social forms and not the consolidated dynamics

of capital. In this process, the role of the State appears to impose an action of direct relationship on the colonies. Marx there makes references to national differences. The first is the consolidation of an international division of labour between industrial countries and raw material producing countries.[6] This differentiation leads some to the idea that the overproduction of developed countries requires geographical expansion to place their products (both Pradella and Astarita credit Harvey for recovering this approach from Luxemburg). However, it abstracts from the fact that it is the expansion of capital at its moment of original accumulation. Therefore, either it is something that has already been overcome, or the proposal for the expansion or internationalization of capital has behind it the idea that capital is not yet global or that there is a lack of development of capitalism in some countries, which has implicit - and not so much - the idea of national autonomy. The State is making progress in promoting the development of a commercial relationship, so those countries that are consolidating themselves as importers of industrial goods must sell in order to buy. As Iñigo Carrera (2008) develops in his critique of Luxemburg's proposal, abstracting from this need is what enables a whole series of theoretical developments around reproduction schemes that cannot account for the simplest link of capitalist society.

In other developments cited by the authors, Marx develops a differentiation between how value governs at the national level and how it governs at the international level.

> "But the law of value, in its international application, is further modified by the fact that on the world market the most productive national labour also counts as the most labour-intensive, provided that the most productive nation is not forced by competition to reduce the selling price of its commodity to its value." (Marx, 1998, Volume I, Chapter XX)

A key aspect in this statement is that it is proposed "as long as the most productive nation is not forced by competition to reduce the price of its commodity to its value." In this way, two ideas arise that we discussed in the previous sections. In one, where when the national relationship is mediated, given state intervention, competition does not fully operate. This argument, as we have seen, is the one that Dussel

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[6] "The constant conversion of the workers into 'supernumeraries' in countries of great industry encourages, as in a greenhouse, emigration to foreign countries and the colonization of them, transforming them into hotbeds of raw materials for the metropolis, as Australia was transformed, for example, into a center of wool production 1846 21,789,346 pounds 1860 59,166,616 pounds 1865 109,734,261 pounds. A new international division of labor is thus created, adapted to the main headquarters of mechanized industry, a division that converts one part of the globe into a field of agricultural production par excellence for the other part, converted into a field of industrial production par excellence." (Marx 1998, Volume I, Chapter XIII)

maintains. Another version of the national cut is the idea that a national value relationship operates that is expressed in differentiated capacities to produce value that is transferred to the relationship between currencies (Astarita 2004). However, they abstract themselves from the fact that Marx develops the exemplification of the genesis of the difference between countries that then allows us to advance in accounting for the international division of labor and the fragmentation of the working class. But this historical genesis that will allow us to advance on the concrete forms in which the development of capital will advance tells us nothing about the content they express.

Astarita uses these sections to justify the idea of attributing his own ideas to Marx when he considers that the magnitude of value changes in the relationship between multiple capitals regardless of the actual labor expenditure made in their production. By taking these quotations from the same chapter to point out that the most productive work counts as more value, as we have pointed out, it converts the social character of work into an external relationship where the work performed has the capacity to be transformed externally to the actual expenditure of human energy into more or less value. This exteriority responds to a view where trade and competition have autonomy over the relations of production, and it is not about the concrete forms that these take. To take quotes from Marx that analyze a differentiation between nations as a result of competition at a moment of development where that difference has not yet been realized implies violating the method that Marx has been deploying.[7] Dussel's proposal of the need to account for general determinations not on the basis of their historical forms appears to be correct.

As we have seen, the state relation is not external but the concrete form that the relation of value takes. At this point we can consider the need to advance in what is the need expressed by each national form in particular. However, as a form of competence it exceeds what we could address in this paper without falling into external explanations.[8] In Volume I of Capital, since Marx has not yet advanced in the determinations on the differentiation of capitals, historical references can only be

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[7] In fact, if we take the quote in isolation and without taking into account the moment in development that is found in Capital, it seems to agree with Astarita: "To the same extent that capitalist production develops in a country, the national intensity and productivity of labor also rise in it, above the international level. The different quantities of commodities of the same kind, produced in different countries in the same labour-time, consequently, have unequal international values, which are expressed in different prices, i.e., in sums of money which differ according to international values. The relative value of money, therefore, will be lower in the nation with a more developed capitalist mode of production than in one where it has been less developed. It follows, then, that the nominal wage, the equivalent of labour-power expressed in money, will also be higher in the first nation than in the second, by which we do not in any way assert that this also applies to the real wage, that is, to the means of subsistence placed at the disposal of the laborer." (Marx 1998, Volume I)

[8] For a study of the concrete development of the international division of labor and the global content of different national forms, see Iñigo Carrera (2008) and Charnock and Starosta (2016).

external except when they have as their object to account for the origin of particular concrete forms necessary to continue in the development of reproduction from the simplest forms to their supersession.[9] Competition appears as external in Volume I, explicitly by Marx, as Dussel shows. The concrete form through multiple capitals will only be resolved on the basis of showing the necessity of valuing individual capitals in relation to their rate of profit. But unity is given by the need of total capital to advance in the increase of relative surplus value, and competition is the concrete way in which this need is realized. Starting from the competition, Pradella, Dussel and Astarita reverse the determination. In the first two in the form of an explanation where the state gains autonomy and in the last in the form of an explanation that emphasizes the market and competition, the nation appears as capable of establishing an autonomous relationship with capital as a whole. This externality where world unity exists outside its parts, or where the parts are externally related, appears to be opposed to the development carried out by Marx.

Beyond examples or particular developments that seem to prove these authors right, in Capital the concrete subject of social production is capital. Now, why is it that Marxism, both among those who start from the political and the national as autonomous and those who aim to overcome it, fails to do so? It is not enough to show the inconsistencies of their proposals. The question also arises as to what need lies in this perspective. As we can see, the different strands of Marxism analyzed express a consciousness that gives power to national unity. In that sense it is a form of nationalist consciousness, even in spite of itself. This national consciousness has as its starting point, as we have seen, a development that starts from analyzing politics or economics as external to the subject and imposing itself externally. Based on the developments of Iñigo Carrera (2008), we can realize that this exteriority responds to the consciousness of a free individual who cannot recognize himself in his own alienation. Freedom in Marxism thus appears externally limited by domination of either the economy or politics. But Marxism expresses a particular form of free consciousness that does not recognize itself in its own alienation. As we have shown, it appears with a freedom that takes on a national form even in those Marxists who deny it. While the action of the free individual appears in his direct relations, politics appears as the form of particular consciousness. Although it expresses the need for capital as a whole, it takes concrete form in the need for a national state. To the political consciousness that cannot account for its own alienation, this political action is presented as an external relationship where the world market or imperialism dominates it but in the face of which, as the bearer of a relative autonomy or of an action that reciprocally influences the other, it finds a power. In Dussel's case, this appears explicitly in the form of the struggle for "national

[9] For an explanation of how systematic and historical analysis appears in Capital as a unit based on the study of money, see Caligaris and Starosta (2016).

liberation." The very idea that it is no longer a free form that takes shape in alienation, taken to the national one, poses the problem of liberation as if there were an external domination. In the case of Astarita, it is presented as the opposite of the perspective of national domination and a proposal of class against class domination, where the national unit of value would put the dominating subject in the hands of national capital, or rather of the national and foreign bourgeoisie that acts in the national space. In this case, it is the political action of the working class at the national level that appears as the bearer of "liberation". Liberation that can assume a partial form in socialism or that can find another form of domination in the bureaucratic state (Astarita 2011). That is to say, it is a consciousness that advances in representing the national as a power of the working class on the basis of advancing over competition. Given the global nature of competition, it is suggested that overcoming can only come from international action. But insofar as it conceives the world as a relationship between nations, it poses it as an advance in the internationalization of liberation and not as the result of capital itself in overcoming it. In this way we can ask ourselves why Marx appears despite his explicit proposals of not starting from national unity as a starting point and of making explicit that the subject is global capital as a source of inspiration for nationalist proposals. One explanation could be attributed to isolated quotations where this national perspective appears to be justified. It could also be attributed to the historical moment in which Marx writes when world development had not yet reached its fullness. But beyond these valid considerations, Marx nevertheless explicitly stated that it was the development of capital as a whole that placed the working class as its revolutionary personification. Hence his proposal of the need for a world party and the international unity of the workers, as a concrete way of expressing this need to the detriment of the national parties. The problem is not limited to writing. Marx's proposals are realized in the expropriation of the bourgeoisie through the political action of the working class by the State. What in Marx is a moment in the development of capital, appears fragmented in the Marxists studied on the basis of starting from competition as the elimination of it and on the basis of starting from the State as a transformation of the character of the State by the action of the class, even when the commodity is the bearer of the social relationship both inside and outside the national space. In this way the particularity of Marxism as a concrete form of a national consciousness advances towards the concrete form of a consciousness that has to present the revolutionary political action of the working class as national by its content and not by its form. Volume I of Capital appears as the most complete way of giving an account of the revolutionary power of the working class, Marxism in its rereadings turned that power into a national power. Throughout the 150 years, this national power had a moment where the appearance that it was carried out in the form of the seizure of power by workers' parties and established socialism in a country proved it right. Since "all science would be superfluous if the form of manifestation and the essence of things coincided directly,"

advancing critically on Marx's developments must allow us to overcome the national form in which our political action appears, not because of an exegesis of Marx as the result of an anniversary, but as an expression of consciousness about our own alienation, it can only be powerful if it starts by recognizing the concrete form of capital as global (world) subject of social production and advances in discovering the concrete form that the power discovered by Marx takes to its own overcoming in this historical moment.